

Bashor's Reply to Calvert.

PREFACE.

On Sunday, December 28th, 1885, a German Baptist preacher of Warsaw, Indiana, delivered an address, four miles south of Waterloo, Iowa, which was stenographically reported, and is now published as "A Sermon, by Elder Jesse Calvert, holding up the principles of the Brethren Church vs. Modern Progression." The publisher announced that the sermon is indorsed by the South Waterloo and Waterloo congregations of the church Mr. Calvert represents. The manuscript was received, corrected and sanctioned by him previous to its passing into the hands of the printer, and is therefore an authoritative document. Mr. Calvert must under the circumstances, be held personally responsible for all the "sermon" presents,—good or bad, wise or otherwise.

It is the purpose of the reviewer to follow Calvert throughout his sermon as closely as possible. And that he may not be misrepresented, or unfairly dealt with, he will be allowed to speak for himself in "his very own words." It will be a dialogue between him and his commentator.

THE SERMON.

*Calvert.* I will read from the 12th chapter of Matthew the 50th verse: "For whosoever will do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother."

*Comment.* Certainly. The text is one of the best and broadest in the Bible. No difference when or where, in what age, nation, or sect, whosoever will do the will of God is a brother, sister or mother to Christ. You will, of course, stick to the text.

*Calvert.* This is the language of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, telling not only his brethren and sisters, but the world, what constitutes a brotherhood in Christ, and upon that principle as taught by our Savior, is what we desire this morning to hold up.

*Comment.* Matthew gives this as the language of Christ, in reply to one who said to him, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak to thee." Whether he meant to teach the world by the language of the text "what constitutes a brotherhood in Christ" is not stated. Your statement may not be correct, and it may. But what do you mean by saying "and upon that principle as taught by our Savior is what we desire this morning to hold up"? Your language is only an unmeaning jumble of words.

*Calvert.* Then may I remark that that brotherhood is stronger than any other known to our world, and as we get the idea of doing the will of God, we must know what it is. We must understand it and not only agree with Jesus what that will is, but with one another what God has commanded of us.

*Comment.* Why, then, is there such a vast difference between portions of your own church on essential questions? You preach that the Bible alone is sufficient for the government of the Church and the salvation of men, while R. H. Miller, John Wise, Enoch Eby, and many others hold and preach that the church must have "rules outside of the Bible" or it "will go to pieces." Your "remark" if true, is hardly applicable to the church of which you are a member. Your leading men do not generally agree upon all questions. For instance, you wear a "rolling collar" coat and are in good standing, so far as some congregations are concerned while in Northern Illinois the elders refuse to "install into the ministry," a man who will not promise to wear a "standing collar" coat, or, what is all the same, "dress in the order of the church." And in Southern Illinois, I. M. Gibson was expelled by the church for dressing about as your members are allowed to dress in Northern Indiana. You see the members of the church you represent, do not "all agree what that will is."

*Calvert.* In the language of the Bible the holy apostle declares, with God there is no respecter of character, but he that feareth him and works righteousness in every nation is accepted of God.

*Comment.* If you wish to talk in the language of the Bible, you will not again make the inaccurate and reckless statement that God is no respecter of character. Character is the very thing he does respect. If God is no respecter of character the thief, and murderer, and liar will be saved as well as the upright and just. You perhaps meant to say God is no respecter of persons—white, black, bond or free—provided they are willing to mould their characters by fearing him and working righteousness.

*Calvert.* I want you to know that we preach just like all other evangelical preachers: Obey God and be saved: disobey and we have not the promise in the Bible whereby any of us can ever enter the heavenly world.

*Comment.* Yes; we understand what you preach and you put it plainly, but many of us know that while you preach the Bible, you have disfellow-

shipped and excommunicated thousands,—some of whom were in your audience,—not because they did not obey the Bible, but because they would not, in addition to obeying the Bible, profess loyalty to and obey Annual Meeting. You knew this, and should not have taken this short cut on the ignorant and uninformed. Only half the truth is worse than silence.

*Calvert.* I dare not undertake to hold up all the ideas that come before me.

*Comment.* Why not?

*Calvert.* May I ask this question: All that believe in the bible and make a profession of the name of Jesus are they in the strictest sense of the bible, brethren and sisters in the true meaning?

*Comment.* Certainly you may ask the question; but our answer would be, No. Pharisees and hypocrites, and cold church members and leaders of the blind, all believe in the Bible, but they are not the "brethren and sisters in the true meaning." Only those "who obey from the heart that form of doctrine are such."

*Calvert.* We might refer to the Mormons, to the Universalists, to all that are in our world holding up the bible and telling the world they believe therein. But the question is, will that alone make us brethren?

*Comment.* Certainly not. Just "holding up the Bible and telling the world they believe therein", would not make you brethren in Christ. It might make you brethren in something else however. But suppose they "hold up the Bible" and tell the world they "believe therein," and do believe in it and obey it, would they not then be brethren? What say you?

*Calvert.* Then I give you the idea of the language of my text. Jesus lays down that rule by which we become heirs of God and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, and this principle is that we all have the same faith and practice and walk by the same rule. We need not repeat this. All know that these thoughts Jesus presents as binding together a brotherhood, that looks to Jesus as the head, and we as brethren walk together and obey the same command, having the same faith in it and walking by identically the same rule and speaking the same thing and short of that Jesus did not recognize the world as his brethren.

*Comment.* When you said "God is no respecter of character" you did not give us "the idea of the language" of the text. And when you "give us the idea" that all must walk by "identically the same rule" you do not "hold up the idea" of the German Baptist church. You know that in many congregations of the church for which you are allowed to preach, women who persist in wearing hats are disfellowshipped and denied communion privileges, while in others they can wear them and enjoy all the privileges of an approved membership. What is essential to church fellowship and communion privileges in Robert Miller's congregation, is not in the congregation in which you reside. Now, sir, if the church of Christ must all—everywhere—believe the same thing, and "all walk by identically the same rule," the church of which you are a member is as far from being the church of Christ as you just endeavored to make your audience believe the Universalists and Mormons are. There is as wide a difference in the faith and practice of the German Baptist church in different localities in some things which they make conditions of church relation, as there is in many things between the Mormons and Universalists. Your sermon would unchristianize your own church and people and yourself. If all must walk by "identically the same rule" you need several apostles of power and eloquence among you.

*Calvert.* And now, as the dispute comes up in our world about the foundation or introduction as we now stand, I ask, did Alexander Mack and his brethren in Germany hold up all these principles, hold them sacred and enlarge upon them as the circumstances of the Church demanded the reproof and exhortation of the children of God? and we are persuaded that all of you are ready to say that they did.

*Comment.* And now since you presume to take part in the disputation, will you read your statement over and candidly tell us what you are trying to say. "Alexander Mack and his brethren in Germany" preached the Gospel. They neither enlarged upon, nor diminished it, nor the principles and elements underlying it. So far as we have accurate information of their preaching and practice, they held that the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be the rule of faith and practice for the people of God. They did not disfellowship members of the church in one locality for things they allowed and fellowshiped in another. They did not believe in the annual meeting and its decisions, for they had none. They did not believe in making it a law to rebaptize all who had been baptized by trine immersion who might come to them; nor they did not believe in, allow or practice, one tenth of the things the German Baptist annual meeting has placed upon

the shoulders of its subjects. The last part of your sentence is unintelligible.

*Calvert.* What were the principles? Why, not only faith and repentance and water baptism, but an organization from the principles of the bible, by which they could fairly and honorably represent the Lord Jesus Christ while they are in the world. And in order that they may come together this large fraternity, that is now in the world, they do not keep it any secret: they do not hold it as private, but preach it to the world everywhere, so that men and women that felt that they were ready and wished to unite with them, they never have been for a moment kept in the dark of what they believed and held up as the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they, in connection with the thought, must declare that they accept of all these principles, as how can two walk together except they be agreed, unanimously have had agreement upon the teachings of the bible, holding up the covenant of God and calling upon the applicant for membership to know whether the principles of non-resistance, of non-conformity and all else connected with the bible was implanted in their hearts; and they have ever for a hundred and sixty years in the United States have not excepted of a person, unless they said they did believe all this: unless they pledged their word, their soul and their life to the loyalty of these principles. And in addition to that they hold out the idea of counsel, advice and explanation held by those that have the oversight or care of the brotherhood as forever listening to them. Are those the principles that are right? We hold this morning that they are right, where our brethren have ever stood and where they this morning stand before the world, unshaken in their principles and bound together by the Gospel bond of love and truth.

*Comment.* I leave it to any intelligent critic to discover the "idea held up" in this half page of mingled words and matted sentences. That faith, repentance, water baptism, non-resistance and non-conformity to the world, washing of the saint's feet Lord's supper, cup and loaf and all that was held in the doctrinal code of Mack and the early fathers of our church, are to-day assented to and practiced by the three branches, Old Order, Conservative and Progressive, no one denies. The differences between us are upon other questions. Your effort to mislead the minds of your auditors by affirming what nobody denies, and jumbling together a number of purely indifferent, pointless questions, out of which neither logic nor sense can be evolved is unworthy your pretensions as a minister of Christ. You should remember your favorite maxim: "There are more preachers in hell according to their number than any other class," and, remembering it, cease to darken counsel lest your unrefined prophecy be fulfilled in part in your own person.

*Calvert.* We give you these ideas, my dear friends, as the principles upon which we have ever lived and live this morning.

*Comment.* Yes, but no body has disputed that you hold the principles you have enumerated. The discussion is over principles you have not the courage to publicly mention and defend.

*Calvert.* I need not, I suppose, particularize upon these thoughts.

*Comment.* No. It is hardly necessary to repeat them. You could not make them plainer by a second enumeration.

*Calvert.* Were I to go into that thought it would take me too long to tell all about every thing that I would love to talk of.

*Comment.* No, it were better for you, instead of "going into a thought," to have a few thoughts go into you.

*Calvert.* A general principle that is so resentive to the world, has ever been that in conformity to the bible of a plain and humble attire, according to the language of the apostle James, cutting off all superfluity, for they have looked to that idea as James declared, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God."

*Comment.* You, however, do not treat "conformity to the Bible of a plain and humble attire" more than does "Modern Progression," since you promised Miss Cora Snider, a "modern progressive," that she could come to your church and obtain membership, hat, dress, and all unchanged. Beside your own daughter wears a fashionable hat, and others, here, were promised by you that they need not "change their style of dress" to become members of the German Baptist church. You know that this is not a "plain, humble attire," as understood by annual meeting" and the general conservative faction of the church to which you belong.

*Calvert.* Don't you know that these things have been the teachings got up from the world and when we open the door that we become friends of the world and enemies of God. Nobody is in the dark about these matters.

*Comment.* Don't we know what? What teach-